



REFLECTIONS

on a Mission



2011 Annual Report
North Carolina State Rehabilitation Council

Our cover photos are of NCDVRS consumers on the job: (l to r) Lisa Wilder, a cosmetologist at Paradise Hair Design in Greenville; Chris Tyson, a training/documentation supervisor at Big Rock Sports in Hamlet; and Vincent Delfabbro, an order filler at East Carolina Vocational Center in Greenville. Ryan King, an employment specialist with RHA Howell in LaGrange, is pictured on page 12.



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2011 Annual Report
North Carolina State Rehabilitation Council

Message from the Chair

On behalf of the North Carolina State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and those we serve, I would like to thank you for your support of and interest in North Carolina's vocational rehabilitation services during 2011. It has been an active year for the council as we continue to fulfill our statutory responsibilities and roles as advocates for the rehabilitation needs of North Carolinians with disabilities.

During 2011, the council remained committed to the development and implementation of North Carolina's state plan and the triennial Comprehensive Needs Assessment. The consumer satisfaction survey was sent out monthly and two public forums were held in the eastern and western regions of the state. You will find the council's participation in these areas detailed in this report.

The council was also active in statewide conferences aimed at conducting public outreach and the annual legislative breakfast to promote awareness of vocational rehabilitation services and the SRC.



Davan Cloninger

The SRC's work continues to be guided by the four goals in our strategic plan:

- ▶ To advocate for adequate services and the community supports necessary for an individual to be successful in a program of services;
- ▶ To assist the DVRS with establishing goals and strategies to effectively address the needs identified by the triennial Comprehensive Needs Assessment;
- ▶ To inform all stakeholders of the role of the SRC and its advocacy efforts; and
- ▶ To enhance the SRC's knowledge of the needs of all of its stakeholders.

I am pleased to report on the work and accomplishments of the council and its committees this year. I would like to thank the council members for their dedication as advocates for all North Carolinians with disabilities.

Davan Cloninger, Chair
North Carolina State Rehabilitation Council

The Mission of the Council

To enhance the employment, independent living and equality of individuals with disabilities in the state of North Carolina.

The Purpose of the Council

- ▶ To advise and work in partnership with the N.C. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (NCDVRS).
- ▶ To assist the division in accomplishing its charge to promote employment and independence for people with disabilities through customer partnerships and community leadership.
- ▶ To provide guidance, input and recommendations relative to the development and expansion of vocational rehabilitation services and programs in an effort to maximize employment opportunities and independence for individuals with disabilities
- ▶ To advocate for legislation that supports individuals with disabilities in making successful transitions into the workforce and the community.
- ▶ To provide customers and stakeholders of vocational rehabilitation services with a formal mechanism to influence policy and the direction of NCDVRS at the highest administrative level of the state.

The Year by the Numbers

- ▶ NCDVRS services helped 6,303 North Carolinians achieve successful employment outcomes.
- ▶ The N.C. Assistive Technology Program provided 8,726 individuals with equipment loans or demonstrations.
- ▶ Disability Determination Services closed 224,757 cases involving Social Security Disability, Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid Disability benefits.
- ▶ Supported employment services resulted in 968 individuals achieving their employment objectives.



Lisa Wilder
Greenville

N.C. State Rehabilitation Council Objectives

1. To carry out the following, after consulting with the state's Workforce Development Board: review, analyze, and advise the Designated State Agency (DSA) regarding the performance of the Designated State Unit (DSU) under this Title, particularly with responsibilities related to eligibility (including order of selection); extent, scope, and effectiveness of the services provided; and functions performed by state agencies that affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving outcomes under this Title.
2. To carry out the following in partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DSU): develop, agree to, and review state goals, and provide in accordance with Section 101(a)(15)(C); evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program; and submit reports of the progress to the Commissioner in accordance with Section 101(a) (15) (E).
3. To advise the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services (DSA) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DSU) regarding activities authorized to be carried out under this Title and assist in the preparation of the State Plan and amendments to the Plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required by this Title.
4. To the extent possible, conduct reviews and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with, the functions of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services: the vocational rehabilitation services provided by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and other public and private entities responsible for providing services to individuals with disabilities under the Act; and the employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under the Act, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with such employment outcomes.
5. To prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and the Commissioner of RSA on the status of the vocational rehabilitation programs operating within the state and to make this report available to the public.
6. To avoid duplication of efforts and to enhance the number of individuals served.
7. Coordinate with the activities of other councils within the state, including: the Statewide Independent Living Council; the advisory panel established under Section 612(a) (21) of the Individuals with Disabilities Act Amendments of 1997; the state Council on Developmental Disabilities; the state Mental Health Planning Council; the state Workforce Investment Board; and other public and private organizations, groups, and functions such as the Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation, the National Rehabilitation Association, and the N.C. Rehabilitation Association.
8. To provide for coordination and to establish working relationships between the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services and the Statewide Independent Living Council and the centers for independent living in the state.
9. To perform other functions consistent with the purposes of this Title comparable to other functions performed by the council.

NCSRC Standing Committees

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee acts on behalf of the council consistent with the council's purpose as outlined in its bylaws. The committee is responsible for compiling the council's response to the State Plan and triennial needs assessment, preparing the annual report, establishing meeting agendas, and setting the general direction of the council and its committees.

In order to further expand SRC participation in the development and implementation of the state plan, the council's Executive Committee addresses state plan development, implementation, and progress towards plan goals and SRC goals within the "Goals, Priorities and Strategies" section of the plan during monthly meetings with the NCDVRS director. The Executive Committee, along with the division's Planning and Evaluation Section, reports on the state plan to the full council at each quarterly meeting for their input and approval.

During its monthly meetings, the Executive Committee continues to work with the Planning and Evaluation Section on the development and implementation of the triennial Comprehensive Needs Assessment. The committee and section staff report back to the full council on the needs assessment at each quarterly meeting for their input and approval. The Executive Committee also maintains responsibility for developing the agendas for the quarterly full council meetings.

In 2011, members of the Executive Committee met with the director of DHHS' Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services to discuss the issue of long-term vocational support and how funding allocated to the local management entities (LMEs) was being tracked.

As a result of these meetings, LMEs were informed that funds would be monitored through the review of unit-cost reimbursement to ensure that the funds appropriated for long-term vocational supports for individuals with mental illness, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse disorders was being properly administered. Committee members are dedicated to closely following the progress reports for these supports and continue to receive periodic updates.

Members also collaborated with agency staff on the development of return-on-investment reports to state legislative leaders. These reports highlighted the services provided and how the monies spent on these programs reflected the economic impact of individuals with disabilities re-entering the workforce and contributing to the economy in multiple ways.

To promote outreach and foster relationships with business community leaders, members participated in statewide activities, including attending the NCRA's annual legislative breakfast, the NCAPSE Conference, and the N.C. Business Leadership Network Conference.

The Executive Committee carefully reviews the nominations of prospective members and encourages new members to serve on designated committees to provide a more balanced representation.

The committee published a commercially printed and an electronic annual report for distribution to the public and key partners. The report summarizes the work of the council and highlights essential components of its mission, such as consumer satisfaction.

Copies were distributed to consumers, state legislators, local VR offices, other states' VR programs, other state rehabilitation councils, rehabilitation-counseling graduate programs and interested community stakeholders.

Consumer Input and Public Outreach Committee

The CIPO Committee reviews, analyzes and makes recommendations to the council regarding the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services delivered by NCDVRS and other public and private agencies in the state.

The committee also gathers information using the consumer satisfaction survey, public forums and feedback from the Client Assistance Program. The committee accomplished several consumer-input tasks and continued to monitor the methods and strategies for input and outreach for 2011. The intent was to increase the voice of consumers and the public regarding the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services, thereby strengthening the quality of services for the citizens of North Carolina. Committee members advocated for sharing consumer satisfaction survey feedback with field offices to improve customer service. The information was distributed to unit managers and posted on the agency's internal website.

In addition to the consumer survey, the committee, along with full council participation, focused on gathering input through public forums. The two public forums held in Charlotte and Goldsboro allowed consumers, providers, employers, stakeholders and staff to express concerns and highlight how services have or have not met existing needs. The committee intends to compile feedback gained through these forums to guide the council's work on the statewide needs assessment, development of agency policies and recommendations for goals and strategies in the 2013 state plan.

Policy and Rules Review Committee

The Policy and Rules Review Committee reviews and makes recommendations relating to division policy and procedures that affect the public, are subject to public rule-making hearings under the state's Administrative Procedures Act, or both.

In the past year, the committee provided feedback on personal assistance services policy revisions; determination of financial need and comparable benefits; state audit (2010) casework errors and improvement measures; on-the-job, work adjustment and internship training policy revisions; mental restoration services policy and self-employment services policy revisions.



Chris Tyson
Hamlet

Community Outreach, Advocacy, Member Development

This year the council's goal has been to have greater impact on its mandates in the areas of community outreach, advocacy and SRC member development.

Liaison Activities

The council continues its involvement with seven liaison groups that require SRC involvement, as well as special interest groups. There are council members who are designated to serve as council representatives. The council continues to focus on identifying potential members who can effectively liaison with some of the groups. Involvement is seen as a critical opportunity to partner with key stakeholders, as well as provide strategic paths for community outreach, advocacy, and SRC member development. The seven groups are:

- ▶ Council on Education Services for Exceptional Children
- ▶ Mental Health Planning Council
- ▶ N.C. Substance Abuse Federation
- ▶ N.C. Council on Developmental Disabilities
- ▶ N.C. Statewide Independent Living Council
- ▶ N.C. Commission on Workforce Development
- ▶ Commission for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse

Public Forums

To obtain consumer input, the council conducted two public forums in 2011, in the western and eastern regions of the state. At the March 24 forum in Charlotte, consumers stressed the need for greater access to transportation and better communication in the eligibility-determination process. Some reported on successes in self-employment with the assistance of NCDVRS.

Themes that emerged in the September 22 Goldsboro forum were the barriers individuals with disabilities face in finding employment, for example, the Deaf who are dependent on interpreters and how their information is perceived and ex-offenders who face the stigma of past offenses when approaching employers.

The following day, the full council met and discussed ways to address the topics that emerged. Also, regional division staff was invited to share issues, concerns and accomplishments. The forum continues to serve as a valuable way to obtain consumer input and increase awareness of the SRC's advocacy role in ensuring that the needs of the consumer and agency are met.

New SRC Member Training and Orientation

New council members received orientation in March and December. Topics included the NCDVRS organizational structure and federal mandates placed on the VR program and the SRC. At council meetings, guest speakers informed members about business leadership networks, the MH/DD/SA system, substance abuse concerns and disability rights issues. One area of particular interest was how North Carolina compared to other states on the issue of segregated and exploited employment.

Review and Analysis of the Client Satisfaction Survey

The consumer satisfaction survey is mandated by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which states that the SRC shall conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of and client satisfaction with:

- ▶ the functions performed by the designated state agency;
- ▶ vocational rehabilitation services provided by state agencies and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under the act; and
- ▶ employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under this title, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with such employment outcomes.



Ryan King
LaGrange

Current Survey Process

The survey is conducted by the SRC in cooperation with division staff. The division contracts with a community rehabilitation program to prepare and mail the survey.

Last year, 10,553 survey forms were sent to former consumers of the division whose cases were closed either successfully rehabilitated in employment or not successfully rehabilitated after services were provided.

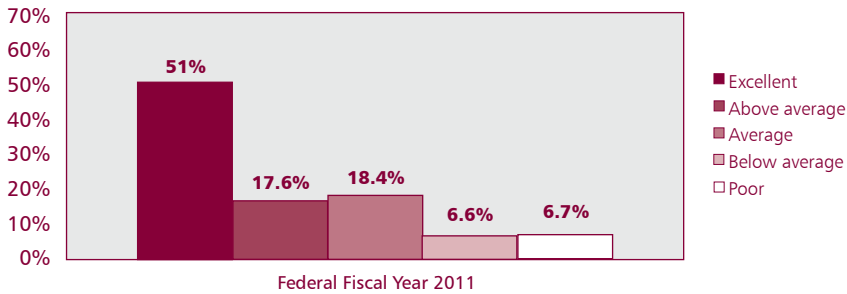
These consumers also received letters explaining why they were asked to respond and to let them know their responses would be kept confidential. A toll-free number was provided for any assistance needed. The survey was also made available in alternative formats. Of the survey forms sent out, 1,181 were completed and returned. The adjusted response rate was 13.03 percent.

Overview of Satisfaction Survey

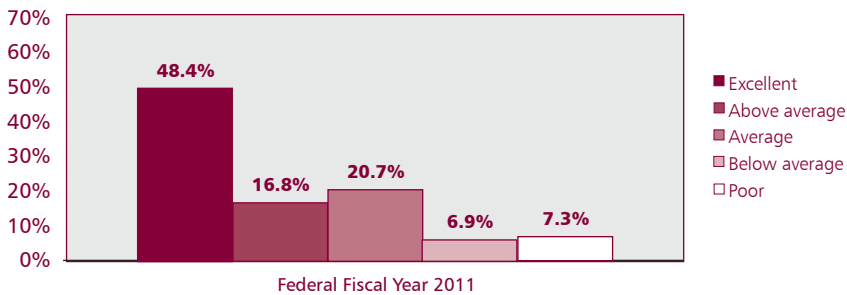
Printed in English, the survey's nine closed-end questions were designed to measure the consumer's experience with the state vocational rehabilitation program and to specifically determine if the consumer: had received information about the Client Assistance Program, had been informed of his or her right to appeal division decisions, and was satisfied with his or her rehabilitation counselor and involvement in the rehabilitation program. The survey also sought to determine what factors had prevented a consumer from obtaining employment and who had completed the survey — the actual consumer with or without help, a family member or a caregiver.

The charts on the following page reflect the 2011 survey's aggregate responses on three critical parameters of consumer satisfaction.

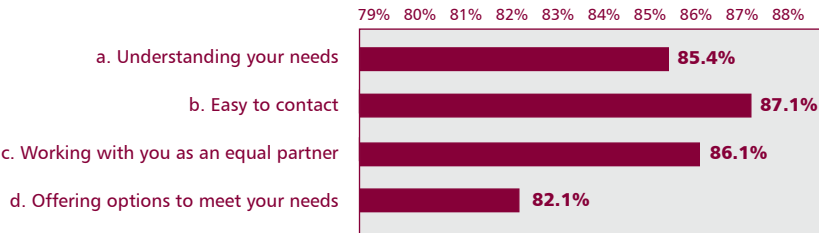
Overall, how would you rate your experience with the North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) Program?



How would you rate the response time for services provided by Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) staff?



Were you satisfied with your counselor in terms of:



Recommendations Related to the 2012 N.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Plan

The Executive Committee provided input to the division on the progress of the 2011 state plan goals and development of the 2012 state plan. The council recommended the following to the division relating to identification of goals, priorities or strategies for FFY12:

Recommendation: Based upon the success of telephone-based survey methods during FFY10, the council recommends expanding their use and places high priority on developing the financial resources to significantly improve the response rate of the consumer satisfaction survey.

Division's Response: The division supports and fully expects to implement this expansion in FFY12 and evaluate the results of the expansion.

Recommendation: In support of its strategic plan pertaining to legislative advocacy, the council recommends that the division prepare to distribute customized reports for each legislative district, specifying the return on investment that NCDVRS has produced with consumers in each district's economy.

Division's Response: The division supported this request and provided all information requested for distribution to legislators.

Recommendation: The council recommended that the small business specialist further develop marketing tools and policies to facilitate self-employment opportunities and increase counselors' comfort levels in providing these services.

Division's Response: The small business specialist has set up a partnership with programs that offer financial resources and technical-support services to individuals with disabilities who are interested in pursuing this employment option.

Recommendation: The council recommends that the division review the intake/ eligibility determination process in order to maximize consumers' understanding of what is required for services and what they can do to help expedite this process.

Division's Response: The division will address this through one of the state plan committees working on the newly established goals for FFYs12-14.

Recommendation: The council recommends that, in addition to consumer satisfaction survey data, the Planning and Evaluation unit distribute unit-based feedback summaries to local offices.

Division's Response: The division has implemented this practice.

Recommendation: The council recommends that the division continue to develop web-based training on NCDVRS policies/services for stakeholder groups including N.C. MH/DD/SAS, the LME network, N.C. Department of Public Instruction and community rehabilitation programs.

Division's Response: The division recognizes this as a huge undertaking and will build upon the initial steps taken during FFY11.

The Members of the North Carolina State Rehabilitation Council: 2010-11

Davan Cloninger Chair	Representing Disability Advocacy Groups
Dennis Troy Vice Chair	Representing Disability Advocacy Groups
Bobbie Grammer Immediate Past Chair	Representing State Education Agency (IDEA)
Kacie Blalock	Representing Non-Division Rehabilitation Counselors
Lisa Ward-Ross	Representing Community Rehabilitation Service Providers
Celeste Hunt	Representing Directors of Projects Under Section 121
Karen Moye-Stallings	Representing NCDVRS Consumers
John Marens	Representing Client Assistance Program (CAP)
Horace Hunt	Representing Business and Industry Sector
Keely Roberts	Representing Business and Industry Sector
Jason Reynolds	Representing Disability Advocacy Groups
Charlie DesLaurier	Representing Statewide Independent Living Council
Carol Walker	Representing Regional Rehabilitation Centers for the Physically Disabled
Doreen Byrd	Representing Parent Training and Information Centers
Brenda Savage	Representing N.C Commission on Workforce Development
Ping Holt	Representing N.C. Chamber of Commerce
Vacant	Representing Disability Advocacy Groups
Vacant	Representing Labor

Non-Voting Members

Linda Harrington, Director	N.C. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Jacqueline Tetterton	Counselor Advisory Committee, NCDVRS

2011 Meeting Schedule

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| ▶ March 24-25 | Charlotte |
| ▶ June 16-17 | Raleigh |
| ▶ September 22-23 | Goldsboro |
| ▶ December 1-2 | Raleigh |

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N.C. State Rehabilitation Council

c/o N.C. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

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Department of Health and Human Services | Albert A. Delia, Acting Secretary
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